

gentle giant, my best friend. He wanted to give me and Taylor the best of everything. He embodied what it is to be a Marine—honor, courage, commitment. We shared a love that helped us through the trials and tribulations of life and marriage to me and the Marines. I find comfort in knowing that the last eight years were the best years of our lives, especially the past three years since the birth of our daughter Taylor. I will dread the nights, knowing that we will never share our bed together again. He will no longer hold me, comfort me and make me feel safe."

And, Lieutenant Pokorney's daughter, Taylor, expressed her loss in these words. "My Daddy, my hero. I will take care of Mommy for you as you asked. We will be best friends. I will take her to Sea World for my birthday like we planned. I love you! I need you! I miss you!"

HONORING THE OUTSTANDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF NOE GUTIERREZ

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 29, 2003

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the perseverance of Noe Gutierrez, who has been chosen the National Adult Learner of the Year for 2003. The Shelbyville, Tennessee, resident has overcome many obstacles in his life while pursuing an education and a better way of life.

The Council on Adult Basic Education chose Noe to receive the award because he epitomizes those who want to empower their lives through knowledge. Noe has not faltered in that pursuit.

Twenty years ago Noe had to leave his native Guatemala to avoid being forced into fighting with a band of guerrilla soldiers who were engaged in a bloody civil war against the government. At just 12 years old, Noe said goodbye to his parents and eight siblings and migrated to the United States where he worked as a migrant farm worker until some Good Samaritans intervened on his behalf.

Noe received his high school diploma through the Bedford County (Tennessee) Adult High School, a much more difficult task than simply attaining a General Educational Development certificate. Now Noe works at the Wal-Mart Distribution Center in Shelbyville, where he has been welcomed with open arms by the community.

Noe is an inspiration for not only immigrants to the United States, but also to anyone who has had to overcome hardships in life. I congratulate Noe for his outstanding achievement and wish him and his family the best of luck in their future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO NORTH MIAMI POLICE DETECTIVE KATHLEEN RUGGIERO

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 29, 2003

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a wonderful human being and a

magnificent public servant symbolized by North Miami Police Detective Kathleen Ruggiero. On Sunday, May 4, 2003, at the Miami Shores Country Club, she will be honored by the Knights of Columbus, Marian Council #3757 of North Miami, Florida, at a festivity dinner dubbed appropriately as "American Night".

Officer Ruggiero came to the North Miami Police Department in 1984 after working as a trooper with the Florida Highway Patrol for five years. The citation for this gala event defines "... her loyal service to the community of North Miami and the Community she has created by her care and concern of children." Above all, however, this officer is more saliently characterized by her deep faith in the God she serves through those unloved and unfortunate children whom Divine Providence has deigned to send to her home. Being a loving mother to her own five children, she has taken upon herself the awesome responsibility of providing the same brand of love and affection to many more children who have been either abandoned or left at her doorsteps.

These children have often been victims of domestic violence or have been shortchanged by the absence of basic family care. The children range in age from 1 to 12 years old, including newly-born babies she saved from a trash bin elsewhere. With her husband Walter, Officer Ruggiero truly represents the best and the noblest of our community. She exudes remarkable wisdom and compassion in tirelessly serving her North Miami community and beyond, and still manages to enlighten her fellow citizens on the agenda of conscientious public service and good governance impacting our duties and responsibilities toward the less fortunate.

Along with countless others in Miami-Dade County, I am indeed a fortunate beneficiary of the brand of genuine advocacy she demonstrates both by way of word and example, buttressing her unconditional love for and commitment to the children uprooted from a home bereft of love and care. I have learned from her the centrality of God in our daily lives, conscious of the fact that the mandate of our Judeo-Christian Faith must characterize our actions toward those who could least fend for themselves.

As she wakes up before the crack of dawn on each given day, she begins her domestic chores from mopping the floor to doing the laundry to preparing the morning breakfast for her brood, fully cognizant that she will always have a full day ahead of her. It is during these early morning hours of quiet solitude that she is enveloped by the loving presence of God, becoming conscious of her own Christian stewardship that God's work on earth must truly become her own.

Lovingly called "Mother Kathy," by her household and her own neighborhood, she simply admits that "... It's not easy. I'm not looking at this like an 18- or 19-year-old would. I should be at the age probably where I don't have any kids and I'm going on cruises. But that wouldn't make me happy. I'm going to change those little lives." Indeed, making a little bit of difference in the lives of abandoned children is her genuine way of changing the kind of world to which she was given to serve.

The Sun Sentinel aptly describes her as "... a woman of few pretenses (who) goes by the distance ... By helping these children you do so much more than help an individual. Even though I adopted these kids, my door

will always be open ... " Indeed, Officer Ruggiero has truly become the consummate public servant and community activist who abides by the dictum that children who have less in life, through no fault of their own, should have more from those of us fortunate enough to have received greater blessings from God. The collective testimony from the parents, community leaders and residents of North Miami represents an unequivocal testimony of the utmost respect and gratitude she enjoys.

With the American Night's Gala Tribute to her, our community is deeply touched by her undaunted quiet leadership and perseverance. As a public servant, she preaches and lives by the adage that, under God's Providence, our quest for personal nobility and professional excellence is not beyond the reach of those willing to dare the impossible. As a genuine steward of God, she has indeed earned our deepest respects and remarkable admiration.

I am truly privileged to represent her and her family in the Congress, and I am grateful that she continues to teach us to live by the noble ethic of loving God by serving our fellowmen. Above all, her utmost caring and compassion for helpless little children appeal to the noblest character of our humanity. My pride in sharing her friendship is only exceeded by my deep gratitude for all that she has done to uplift our honor and dignity.

This is the magnificent legacy with which we will always honor Officer Kathleen Ruggiero.

CONGRATULATING THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS ON ITS RECENT SIGNING OF EUROPEAN UNION ACCESSION TREATY

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 29, 2003

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to offer my sincere congratulations to the Republic of Cyprus, as they recently became 1 of 10 new member states in the European Union (EU).

On April 16, 2003, President Tassos Papadopoulos signed the EU Accession Treaty, and the Republic of Cyprus officially became a part of the European Union. This will undoubtedly prove to be a momentous day for the people of Cyprus, as membership in the EU will provide security, prosperity, and increased activity in international affairs for both the Cypriot government and the citizens it represents. As Cyprus begins this new chapter in its history, I am confident that it will continue to serve as a model for economic and political progress, and the blossoming relationship between the Cypriot and U.S. governments will continue to flourish.

Of great note during this joyous occasion is the fact that the Greek-Cypriots who recently became a part of the EU have not forgotten about their Turkish counterparts who still toil under the illegitimate rule of Rauf Denktaş. Just days after the EU accession, Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis discussed details of a Greek-Cypriot plan to ease economic hardships in Turkish occupied northern Cyprus. Also, Cypriot President Tassos Papadopoulos has made it clear that negotiations for a reunified Cyprus will continue, and